

# **Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative**

## **July 1997**

### **ATF Trace Analysis Reports: Technical Material**

The two enclosed Technical Notes are referenced in the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative ATF Trace Analysis Reports (General Findings: Local Illegal Firearms Markets) as being available upon request from ATF. One technical note explains why certain data sets are not used in all of the analyses. The other technical note explains how ATF determined time-to-crime findings.

**Department of Treasury  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms**



## Technical Note *i*:

### Exclusions From Data Sets On Which Findings Are Based\*

#### ***Exclusions From Age Based Comparisons:***

Certain Trace Analysis Reports of selected communities are not considered in age-related findings, due to characteristics of these sites' data sets. Specifically, the existence of very small counts in some of the subgroups, i.e. below 40 cases, restricted the use of these data sets in age-based analyses. Where any subgroup count was found to be below 40 cases, comparisons among age groups were considered inappropriate. For example, in the site of Inglewood there is only one juvenile crime gun trace request. Inclusion of this site in age-based analyses might have biased such findings as whether handguns predominate among juvenile crime guns.

The following is a list of sites not included in age-based analyses underlying the general findings:

- 1) Atlanta, Georgia: Insufficient number of cases in one or more age categories. There are only 21 crime gun trace requests in the juvenile category. This information can be found in Report B of the Atlanta report.
- 2) Inglewood, California: Insufficient number of cases in one or more age categories. There is only one crime gun trace request in the juvenile category, and 24 crime gun trace requests in the youth category. This information can be found in Report B of the Inglewood report.
- 3) Jersey City, New Jersey: Insufficient number of cases in one or more age categories. There are only 35 crime gun trace requests in the adult category. This information can be found in Report B of the Jersey City report.
- 4) St. Louis, Missouri: Insufficient number of cases in one or more age categories. There is only one crime gun trace request in the juvenile category, four crime gun trace requests in the youth category, and 22 in the adult category. This information can be found in Report B of the St. Louis report.

These sites are included in findings not based on age category, including those relating to handguns, semi-automatic handguns, firearm concentration by type, manufacturer, and caliber, and top source states.

#### ***Exclusions From Firearm Type-Based Comparisons:***

Out of the over 37,000 guns analyzed, 21 firearms spread across six communities (Baltimore, Birmingham, Milwaukee, New York, Salinas, and San Antonio) were not identified by type of firearm (semiautomatic, revolver, etc.). In each community report's Table B, which examines the distribution of crime gun trace requests by age of possessor, the number of guns noted includes all cases for which there is information on the date of birth of the possessor. Among the 21 firearms unidentified by type, 13 are associated with date of birth information. These 13 firearms are included in Table B of the relevant reports. In each community report's Table C, which examines the distribution of crime gun trace requests by type of gun, firearms unidentified by type are *not* shown in the tables, however, they are counted in the denominator in calculating the percentages of the identified types of firearms by age group and for all ages.

For example, Birmingham Report B states that there are 46 juvenile crime gun trace requests, while Birmingham Report C identifies a gun type for only 45 juvenile crime guns. The one gun unidentified by type among the juvenile crime guns in Birmingham, which represents 2.17 percent of the total number of guns submitted for tracing that were recovered from juveniles, is not shown in Table C. Percentages for firearm type distribution among juveniles are calculated using *all* the juvenile crime gun trace requests noted in Table B, including the one weapon not identified by type.

\*page 7: 17 Communities Report; p. 20: Individual Community Reports

Comparisons among the 17 communities that refer to analyses by type of firearm are based *only* on the trace requests for which there are *both* date of birth information and firearm type information. For this reason, the percentages referred to in the General Findings: Local Illegal Firearms Markets that are associated with firearm type in a particular community may differ slightly from percentages that would be obtained using the data found in the relevant community report Table C. Two instances of this difference are apparent in the text found on the first page of General Findings: Local Illegal Firearms Markets.\* As noted there, the correct percentage of juvenile crime guns that are handguns in Salinas, California is 73 percent; and the correct percentage of juvenile crime guns that are semiautomatic handguns in Birmingham, Alabama is 47 percent.

\*page 7: 17 Communities Report; p. 20: Individual Community Reports

## Technical Note *ii*: Time-to-Crime Analysis\*

To estimate the percentage of crime guns rapidly diverted from retail sale at federally licensed firearms dealers, ATF used the following method:

ATF arrived at a high end estimate by comparing the number of crime guns with a time-to-crime of less than three years with the number of crime guns with a time-to-crime of more than three years among the 37 percent of the crime guns submitted for tracing that resulted in *successful NTC traces*. This measure is shown by age category in the High End Estimate table (see below). Of all crime guns that resulted in successful NTC traces, 48.8 percent had a time-to-crime of less than 3 years. This 48.8 percent is an actual finding of less than three year time-to-crime for the *37 percent* of crime gun trace requests that resulted in successful NTC traces. It is also a high end estimate of the percentage of the *total* number of crime guns submitted for NTC tracing with time-to-crime of less than three years.

ATF closed the remaining 63 percent of the crime gun trace requests without achieving a successful NTC trace for one of three reasons: (1) insufficient firearms-related information, 23 percent of total requests; (2) Federal firearms licensee records unavailable, 7 percent; or (3) firearm determined to be too old to trace, 33 percent. (Community-specific information about successful and closed traces can be found in Table F of each community report.)

To estimate the time-to-crime rates of the traces that did not result in successful NTC traces, ATF evaluated each of the three categories of closed traces. For the firearms traces that were closed due to insufficient firearms-related information on the trace form (23 percent), and those lacking Federal firearms licensee records (7 percent), ATF assumed that *half* of both these groups of traces had less than three years time-to-crime, and *half* had more than three years time-to-crime.

With respect to the 33 percent of the firearms traces that were closed under NTC guidelines relating to age determination in special projects, ATF assumed that they would not have the same time-to-crime rates as firearms that resulted in successful NTC traces. Rather, ATF assumed that the *entire* 33 percent of the firearms for which traces were closed because they were determined to be too old to trace had *more than 3 years time-to-crime*.

Combining the estimates of time-to-crime among all three categories of closed NTC traces, ATF concluded that the low end estimate of the percentage of all firearms submitted for tracing with less than 3 years time-to-crime is 26.6 percent. This measure is shown by age category in the Low End Estimate tables (see below).

\*page 8: 17 Communities Report; p. 21: Individual Community Reports

## Technical Note *ii*: Tables

### Time-To-Crime: High End Estimates of the Percentage of Successfully Traced Crime Guns Rapidly Diverted From First Retail Sale at Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers

<b>Time-to-Crime</b>	<b>Adult</b> % [guns]	<b>Youth</b> % [guns]	<b>Juvenile</b> % [guns]	<b>Row totals</b> % [guns]
<b>Less than three years</b>	<b>46.3%</b> [1604]	<b>54.3%</b> [1257]	<b>43.3%</b> [349]	<b>48.8%</b> [3210]
<b>More than three years</b>	53.7% [1859]	45.7% [1058]	56.7% [457]	51.2% [3374]
<b>Column totals</b>	100% 3463	100% 2315	100% 806	100% 6584

Number of Missing Observations: 31005

### Time-To-Crime: Low End Estimates of the Percentage of Successfully Traced Crime Guns Rapidly Diverted From First Retail Sale at Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers

<b>Time-to-Crime</b>	<b>Adult</b> % [guns]	<b>Youth</b> % [guns]	<b>Juvenile</b> % [guns]	<b>Row totals</b> % [guns]
<b>Less than three years</b>	<b>25.2%</b> [1604]	<b>30.5%</b> [1257]	<b>21.9%</b> [349]	<b>26.6%</b> [3210]
<b>More than three years</b>	74.8% [4760]	69.5% [2861]	78.1% [1246]	73.4% [8876]
<b>Column totals</b>	100% [6364]	100% [4118]	100% [1595]	100% [12077]

### Time-to-Crime: Low End Estimate of the Percentage of Successfully Traced Juvenile and Youth Crime Guns Rapidly Diverted From First Retail Sale at Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers

<b>Time-to-Crime</b>	<b>Juvenile and Youth</b> % [guns]
<b>Less than three years</b>	<b>28.1%</b> [1606]
<b>More than three years</b>	71.9% [4007]
<b>Column totals</b>	100% [5713]

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Office of Liaison and Public Information  
(202) 927-8500